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CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method for dynamic access decision information
5 retrieval, the method comprising:
 receiving a request for access decision information
 from an application, wherein the request identifies one
 or more entitlement information items;
 determining an information provider for a given
10 entitlement information item within the one or more
 entitlement information items;
 retrieving the given entitlement information item
 from the information provider;
 forming a response, wherein the response includes
15 the one or more entitlement information items; and
 returning the container to the application.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 caching the retrieved given entitlement information
20 item in a local storage.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 identifying a cached entitlement information item
 within the one or more entitlement information item; and
25 retrieving the cached entitlement information item
 from a local storage.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the cached
 entitlement information is in the form of a container.

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5. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of retrieving the given entitlement information item includes:

generating a retrieval client, wherein the retrieval
5 client retrieves the given entitlement information item from the information provider.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the retrieval client generates a protocol module and wherein the protocol
10 module retrieves the given entitlement information item from the information provider using a provider specific protocol.

7. The method of claim 5, wherein the retrieved given
15 entitlement information item is in the form of a container.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the application is an access manager.

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9. The method of claim 8, wherein the access manager includes a rules engine.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the response is an
25 extensible markup language document.

11. An apparatus for dynamic access decision information retrieval, the apparatus comprising:

receipt means for receiving a request for access
30 decision information from an application, wherein the

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request identifies one or more entitlement information items;

determination means for determining an information provider for a given entitlement information item within
5 the one or more entitlement information items;

retrieval means for retrieving the given entitlement information item from the information provider;

forming means for forming a response, wherein the response includes the one or more entitlement information
10 items; and

returning means for returning the container to the application.

12. The apparatus of claim 11, further comprising:
15 means for caching the retrieved given entitlement information item in a local storage.

13. The apparatus of claim 11, further comprising:
means for identifying a cached entitlement
20 information item within the one or more entitlement information item; and
means for retrieving the cached entitlement information item from a local storage.

25 14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the cached entitlement information is in the form of a container.

15. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the retrieval means includes:

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means for generating a retrieval client, wherein the retrieval client retrieves the given entitlement information item from the information provider.

5 16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the retrieval client generates a protocol module and wherein the protocol module retrieves the given entitlement information item from the information provider using a provider specific protocol.

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17. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the retrieved given entitlement information item is in the form of a container.

15 18. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the application is an access manager.

19. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the response is an extensible markup language document.

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20. A computer program product, in a computer readable medium, for dynamic access decision information retrieval, the computer program product comprising:

25 instructions for receiving a request for access decision information from an application, wherein the request identifies one or more entitlement information items;

30 instructions for determining an information provider for a given entitlement information item within the one or more entitlement information items;

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instructions for retrieving the given entitlement information item from the information provider;

instructions for forming a response, wherein the response includes the one or more entitlement information items; and

instructions for returning the container to the application.

21. The computer program product of claim 20, further comprising:

instructions for caching the retrieved given entitlement information item in a local storage.

22. The computer program product of claim 20, wherein the instructions for retrieving the given entitlement information item include:

instructions for generating a retrieval client, wherein the retrieval client retrieves the given entitlement information item from the information provider.

23. The computer program product of claim 22, wherein the retrieval client generates a protocol module and wherein the protocol module retrieves the given entitlement information item from the information provider using a provider specific protocol.

24. The computer program product of claim 22, wherein the retrieved given entitlement information item is in the form of a container.

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25. The computer program product of claim 20, wherein the response is an extensible markup language document.